



# The Proceedings of the International Conference on Creationism

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Volume 2  
Print Reference: Volume 2:I, Pages 159-164

Article 29

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1990

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### Recommended Citation

Myers, Ellen (1990) "The Breakdown of Philosophy and the Modern Evolution-Creation Debate," *The Proceedings of the International Conference on Creationism*: Vol. 2 , Article 29.  
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## THE BREAKDOWN OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE MODERN EVOLUTION-CREATION DEBATE

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### ABSTRACT

All non-biblical philosophies break down to the extent that they depart from the God/Creator of Scripture. Today we witness the breakdown of non-biblical philosophy. It flounders due to its own faulty premises. This paper considers the most important aspects of the breakdown of non-biblical philosophy from the biblical creation perspective.

### INTRODUCTION

Biblical philosophy is "to think God's thoughts after Him" and agrees that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7). Its starting point for evaluating all things is God as CREATOR "of Whom, and through Whom, and to Whom are all things" (Romans 11:36). It strives to be faithful in all respects to God's infallible revelation of Himself in the Bible (Isaiah 8:20; Jeremiah 8:9). Non-biblical philosophy, on the other hand, is "to think on one's own," and its starting point is ultimately the self of each thinker.

Non-biblical philosophy always more or less denies the origin of the world by biblical creation EX NIHILO. Hence its basic premises are monism. Monism is the idea that this present world is all there is, that it had no beginning, and that it will last forever. Cosmic evolutionism is the idea that all has evolved out of a primeval material or spiritual "One." Monism and cosmic evolutionism marked all philosophies of classical antiquity. They are also part and parcel of modern non-biblical philosophy in its obsolescent Darwinian as well as various cosmic evolutionist forms.

However, all non-biblical philosophies break down to the extent that they depart from the God/Creator of Scripture. Today we witness the breakdown of non-biblical philosophy right before our eyes. Having denied the Creator, it founders due to its own faulty premises. We will consider some of the most important aspects of the breakdown of non-biblical philosophy from the biblical creation perspective.

### PHILOSOPHY IN ANTIQUITY

The eminent philosopher and historian of science Stanley L. Jaki has thoroughly investigated the thought systems of the great civilizations of antiquity. They all shared a cosmology of an eternally self-existing, monistic, pantheistic, and animistic universe everlastingly fluctuating between long periods of expansion and contraction, ascent and descent, birth and death. In such a universe man cannot produce lasting achievements because he believes himself tied to an ultimately meaningless treadmill in the great cosmic wheel of eternal recurrences. His highest wisdom consists in detachment from all purpose and desire. Help and guidance from a deity beyond this world--the God of biblical creation EX NIHILO--is ruled out. The "gods" of antiquity symbolized the forces of nature and were subject to it.

Jaki also shows that the ancients in India, China, Egypt, Babylonia, and ancient Greece and the Aztecs, Incas, and Mayas excelled in the observations of nature and the starry sky and in practically useful technical inventions. Upon a few occasions, most notably in ancient Greece, they also advanced in abstract thought, such as Euclidean geometry, and in specifically science-related theorizing. However, due to their monistic premises even their best thinkers such as Plato or Aristotle could not consistently do more than speculate on an ever shifting world as all there is. Today Hinduism best represents that ancient monistic world view, which is now rapidly spreading again in the West through the "New Age" movement.



Greek philosophy combined purely speculative thought with empirical observations. It is said to begin with the prediction of a solar eclipse in 585 B.C. by Thales. Besides doing astronomy, Thales also sought to find unity in the multiplicity of observed data, the highest ambition of non-biblical philosophy. Thales presupposed a single elementary cosmic matter at the root of all transformations of nature. Greek philosophy never departed from the basic monism inherited from earlier thought. This was also true for Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). He believed in the eternity of the material universe. No armchair philosopher, he studied firsthand all the natural sciences known in his time. However, he considered all nature as one single organismic whole in the process of cyclical transformation. He was not a Darwinist evolutionist because he believed in the eternity and fixity of species determined by their eternal, inherent "forms," a concept he took from Plato. However, he explicitly denied creation (DE CAELO, III), and he taught (PHYSICS, VIII) that matter and forms were co-extensive and co-eternal with God (pantheism). Much like the vitalist evolutionist philosophers of the nineteenth century A.D. Aristotle believed in an immanent teleology in natural processes. By these processes, he taught, nature's "forms" strove to actualize themselves out of the eternal primary matter in which he, like Thales, anchored the essential oneness of all things.

It is of supreme importance to realize that, as Jaki points out, "If man [is] a tiny part of a huge cosmic animal, there remain[s] little if any psychological possibility that he could ever achieve a conceptual stance which would put him outside the whole for a critical look at it." (1) Such a stance is not only psychologically unlikely but also logically false if nothing exists beyond this present world. Due to their monistic premises the Greek philosophers could only act "as if" it were possible for man to be a separate "subject" studying and making valid statements about the rest of reality as its "object." However, only a cosmology which recognizes that there is a personal Being who is transcendent (apart from and above the universe), absolutely sovereign (he does not depend upon the world, but rather the world depends on him in all respects), who made man in his own image and likeness and gave him dominion over the rest of the world--that is, the cosmology of biblical creation and its God--allows man to reason consistently as a "subject" investigating the world as an "object" as he in fact does. This point alone invalidates all non-biblical philosophies. Because of their non-biblical philosophies no great civilization except the Christian West developed modern science. As Jaki says: "The future of man rests with that judgement which holds the universe to be the handiwork of a Creator and Lawgiver. To this belief, science owes its very birth and life. Its future and mankind's future rest with the same faith." (2)

#### MODERN IDEALIST PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

Modern non-biblical evolutionist thinkers have often explicitly returned to the world view of antiquity. One of them was Pitirim A. Sorokin (1889-1968), chairman of the department of sociology at Harvard from 1930-1959. He stated that the roots of his philosophy were in "the ancient, powerful, and perennial stream of philosophical thought represented by Taoism, the Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita ... shared by all branches of Buddhism, including the Zen Buddhist thinkers ... by Heraclitus and Plato ... reiterated by ... thinkers of the Neo-Platonic, the Hermetic, the Orphic, and other currents of thought." (3)

Sorokin's philosophy and the ancient pagan and "idealist" (roughly, Platonic) thought systems he embraced foreshadow the New Age movement today. The adherents of this movement deny biblical creation and see the world as one with "god." Its world view is monistic and pantheistic. It is evolutionistic, believing that the world always existed and evolved over eons of time under the guidance of cosmic spirits or forces. Because of its uncritical and haphazard mingling of many strands of earlier "idealist" thought, this movement shows the present breakdown of philosophy as a formal and systematic method of assessing reality. Among philosophers whose thought has affinity with this movement are Heraclitus (ca.525-475 B.C.), who taught that all things are always in flux; Plato (427?-347 B.C.); Plotinus (205-270 A.D.), the most important neoplatonist philosopher; Spinoza (1632-1677), whose pantheism equated God with nature; Rousseau (1712-1778), the philosophical father of the disastrous French Revolution and of modern "child-centered" education; Hegel (1770-1831), a pantheist from whom Marx inherited his "dialectical" formulation of social evolution; Nietzsche (1844-1900), greatly influenced by Darwinism and a modern disciple of Heraclitus; Bergson (1859-1941), who founded the "creative evolution" school of philosophy; his student Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), a "cult hero" of today's New Age movement who taught that God evolves from matter, a process which will culminate in the transformation of matter into "pure spirit"; and modern existentialist thinkers like Sartre.

#### MODERN RATIONALIST OR MATERIALIST THOUGHT

A study of the more "rationalist" or "materialist" philosophers from Aristotle to Dewey (1859-1952) who saddled America's public schools with his notorious "progressive education," shows that to the degree that they embrace monism and deny the Creator of the Bible the differences



between them and the "idealists" with regard to "god" (atheism vs. pantheism) are ultimately only a strife about words. For example, the generally rationalist philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is related to modern New Ageism because its idea that reality is defined by man's own perception can be traced to him. Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900), Russia's greatest philosopher, taught a New Age-type world view of cosmic evolution permeated with Darwinism until shortly before his death when he repudiated his earlier views and returned to orthodox Christianity. There are basic similarities between Marx, the atheist-materialist, and Plotinus, the neoplatonist pantheist-idealist.(4) Georgii Plekhanov (1856-1918), the philosophical father of Russian Marxism, discovered with pleasure the essential kinship between modern Marxist materialism and the pantheism of Spinoza.(5) Dewey, a thoroughgoing materialist Darwinian evolutionist, was strongly influenced by Hegel, the pantheist. Monistic idealism and monistic materialism are but the branches of the same root, monism, which is the denial of biblical creation and its transcendent God. In the collapse of communism and Darwinism we see the breakdown of the materialist branch of that root today.

## THE PRACTICAL OUTWORKING OF NON-BIBLICAL MONISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Non-biblical philosophers have been at odds with each other about human action and most everything else since they began to "do philosophy." The Bible teaches us to "test all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). Non-biblical philosophy attempts to test all things, but it cannot "hold fast that which is good," for it has no evaluative standard by which it can determine or validate once and for all what shall count as "good." This problem is aggravated by philosophies of flux or change as all there is in this world, especially philosophies of modern evolutionism. In their world of continuous change any command to "hold fast that which is good" can at best serve only for short periods of time with minimal change and only in a relative, not an absolute sense. For nothing in a self-existent, self-contained evolutionist world of universal flux can possibly be "good" absolutely, once and for all--because in such a world nothing really is once and for all. Non-biblical philosophers cannot even make assertions of temporary, relative or probable "truth." To do so they would have to know first what absolute, certain "truth" is to begin with, as St. Augustine already pointed out fifteen hundred years ago in *CONTRA ACADEMICOS*. Because non-biblical philosophy has no absolute truth to begin with, it is bankrupt from the start.

Modern Darwinism in particular gives no reliable guidance for its practical outworking. Many mutually contradictory social theories lean upon Darwin for "scientific" support. For example, both laissez-faire individualist free market economists as well as socialists have claimed substantiation of their views in Darwin. Between about 1900 and World War I all political parties in every European country "invoked Spencer and Darwin,"(6) as did both imperialism and pacifism.(7)(8) Darwinism sired the despicable and deadly racism and eugenicism embraced by the Nazis who considered themselves the most forthright enforcers of Darwinian evolutionism.(9) It also gave tremendous impetus to Marxism and Communism. These modern abominations which cost many millions of innocent human lives and untold torments and deprivations are the products of monistic philosophy in modern materialist dress. Monistic philosophy in its ancient pantheist-idealist forms also committed its bloody mass murders in Assyria, Babylonia, Canaan, Egypt, China, and under the Aztecs, Incas and Mayans.(10)(11) Hinduism and Buddhism, monist-pantheist to the core, keep millions in abject misery and degradation on a level with or lower than animals. All this is not surprising because only biblical creation teaches that man was created in the transcendent, personal Creator-God's own image and likeness and with dominion over the works of God's hands. Where the God of the Bible is denied, man too is trodden underfoot. The breakdown of non-biblical philosophy manifests itself perhaps most clearly in the misery, slavery and death of the men, women and children subjected to its practical outworking.

## CONFLICT AND TRUTH IN MONIST-EVOLUTIONIST PHILOSOPHIES

The brutality in the outworking of monist-evolutionist philosophies is no accident. Monist-evolutionist philosophies begin with conflict within the "One" ("god" or "primary matter") as the mechanism giving rise to the "Many" (the multitude and variety of observed phenomena). For the ancients the world was unceasing conflict as the essential, primordial "One" disintegrates into the "Many" only to return to its "Oneness" at the end of each cosmic evolutionist cycle. Eastern concepts of Karma and reincarnation, Nietzsche's "super-man" evolving by struggle from lower mankind extrapolated directly from Darwinism, his belief in the "eternal recurrence" of all things, and the notion of an "oscillating universe" in physics today belong to this world view. Darwinian and "punctuated equilibrium" evolutionists see in conflict ("survival of the fittest," or catastrophes causing mega-mutations) the change agent leading evolution onward and upward. Marxism and Nazism, both closely related to Darwinian evolutionism as we have seen, were philosophies of brutal conflict ("class war" and "race war") as the means to usher in the future perfect society. Conflict in monist-evolutionist philosophies is hence not evil but rather the dynamic element indispensable to "progress." The Hegelian dialectical scheme



of thesis-antithesis-synthesis which Marx took over as his own is a modern version of this ancient monist-evolutionist world-view.

It is therefore no surprise that John Dewey, a consistent follower of Hegel and an ardent Darwinian evolutionist since his student days, introduced conflict within the very definition of "truth" itself. For him any statement purporting to be "truth" had to be tentative in view of possible future inquiry, and to contain "the confession of its own inaccuracy and one-sidedness" as "an essential ingredient." (12) This means that according to Dewey "inaccuracy and one-sidedness" must of necessity forever inhere in, help formulate, and conflict with "truth;" earlier "truths" are forever in conflict with later "truths." Hence Dewey's definition of "truth" really defines nothing and is contrary to the fundamental logical law of contradiction (that is, a term must mean at most a finite number of things). Christian philosopher Gordon Clark shows that Dewey's denial of the law of contradiction reduces his philosophy and by extension all philosophies of universal flux or evolutionism to nonsense.(13)

Dewey also condemned the traditional philosophical "spectator theory of knowledge" with its "subject-object" method. He argued that "knowing" and "doing" are the same thing, analogous to scientific experimentation where the "truth" of a theory is judged by its experimental results or consequences. The biblical thinker must point out that Dewey himself was guilty of the "subject-object" approach when presupposing a priori that monistic evolutionism is true. To reason at all, man must reason as though he himself stood apart from and above nature; his very mode of reasoning bears out the biblical creation account.

Until about the end of the eighteenth century A.D. Western philosophers reasoned by the "subject-object" method, though without reference to its epistemological foundation in biblical creation. They believed that human thought must conform to a really existing "given" reality. The tremendous change that began with Kant was that man's consciousness was increasingly seen as the final organizing principle of outer reality reduced to mere "phenomena" or "appearances." In man's mind, then, all things were unified and the self and the "not-self" coincided. This, of course, is consistent with non-biblical evolutionist monism. There is this difference, however: the ancients still saw themselves as subject to a world they had not made themselves, whereas the modern philosopher wants a world he himself creates by his own mind and will, so he may transform and rule it; in biblical language, he wants to be God. Alternately, the modern philosopher is not a philosopher in the Western traditional sense at all. He absorbs the world into his own consciousness. Thomas Molnar rightly states that this world view has led to an "increasing disarray of the philosophical enterprise ... insofar as the philosopher assumes the magician's role and manipulates the constitution of being, he liquidates the philosophic enterprise ..." (14) Molnar wants to restore knowledge "as a valid relationship between subject and object as separate entities," and in order to do so the human soul must realize "its creatureliness, its nonidentity with God." If no distinctions are set between the self and the not-self, "the subject is lost in self-contemplation, or, what amounts to the same, it stares ahead into nothingness." (15) Thus non-biblical philosophy, having rejected biblical creation, ends in its own self-destruction.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The fundamental premises of non-biblical philosophy are these. First, in its monistic world of which man is but a tiny part man cannot reason consistently about the world as though he stood outside and above it. Such a "subject-object" stance is consistent only with the biblical creation perspective seeing man as made in God the personal, transcendent Creator's own image and likeness and with dominion over the works of God's hands. This point alone invalidates all philosophies not grounded in biblical creation. Second, the evolutionism presupposed in non-biblical philosophies robs them of all fixed reference points or absolutes from which to validate their views. Modern Darwinism in particular gives no reliable guidance for its practical outworking. Hence it led to mutually contradictory movements and finally to the horrors of Nazism, Communism, racism and eugenicism. Ancient monistic philosophies also resulted in mass murder, misery and death. Third, monistic non-biblical thought sees conflict not as evil but as the dynamic change agent indispensable to "progress" and "truth." Lastly, since Kant, non-biblical thinkers increasingly attempt to be as gods by transforming and ruling a world they themselves create by their own minds and wills. This is the end stage of the breakdown of non-biblical philosophy, and it is before us today. Non-biblical philosophy first betrayed and has now abandoned the true purpose of philosophy, which is to interpret the world as it really is. Because the world is really the product of biblical creation, only a philosophy which fully accepts and reasons from biblical creation is sufficient for that purpose.

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